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ABSTRACT

A subsample of 325 migrants drawn from the 1970 National Demographic Census of the Dominican Republic was analyzed to describe social and economic characteristics of recent rural-urban migrants and determine their employment changes. The sample was limited to heads of households who had lived in their present location from one to five years. Males accounted for 84% of the sample. Characteristics measured were family size, level of education (the majority had less than a fourth grade education), age, and age at migration. Better employment was found to be the biggest factor in interanl migration, having motivated more than 50%. Change of occupation had occurred for one-fourth of the migrants, with a significant increase in percentages of heads of households employed in government, semi-skilled occupations, food processing, personal services, community sales, and unskilled work. Though recent migrants greatly improved their work opportunities by moving, employment of these unskilled migrants as rural-urban migration continues would seem to hinge on growth of traditional sector jobs in urban areas. Further implications were for more rural educational opportunities, the need to create rural farm and nonfarm employment opportunities, and increased investment in rural infrastructure. (RS)

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Rural-U[illegible]gration and Employment In a Developing Economy

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Rural-Urban Migration and Employment In a Developing Economy

by

Glenn C.W. Ames and Tom Sprouse*

Introduction

Economic development programs have largely bypassed the small agricultural producer in developing countries and failed to provide expected employment for rural-urban migrants. Thus unemployment has become a serious problem in the Dominican Republic, now about 20 percent -- a rate similar to many other Caribbean countries [23, p.17]. Search for employment appears to be the principal motivation for internal migration. Augmented by rapid population growth, unabated migration from rural areas continues, increasing unemployment in urban areas, heightening social and political pressures, and diverting scarce resources to the maintenance of welfare programs [15, p. 1].

Certain universal factors appear to influence migration from rural to urban areas in developing countries as they did in the United States during the post-WWII period. Dr. C.E. Bishop, Executive Director of the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty in 1967, argued in The People Left Behind that "The dismal outlook for employment in rural areas caused millions of people to migrate to the cities....the vast majority of those moving from rural areas to the central cities have little formal education and few skills. They seek employment in unskilled and semiskilled occupations, in which relatively few jobs are available

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[and]... many are still seeking such employment." Dr. Bishop concluded, "...migration from the farms to the cities of America ... went on unassisted, undirected, and largely unnoticed until recent years, when it exploded in our faces with a vengence," [3, pp.9-10].

The Dominican Republic occupies an area of 18,703 square miles with a population of 4,830,000 growing at an estimated annual rate of 3.4 percent in 1974 [22]. Small towns and municipalities had the largest rate of population increase during the last decade. Growth of provincial urban centers may indicate a step-type process of migration; rural people move first to small towns, then to major urban centers, and finally to the national capital [7; 8]. However, the capital city, Santo Domingo, had the largest net in-migration. The total population of the Distrito Nacional, including Santo Domingo, reached 817,645 persons during the 1960 to 1970 decade, an annual rate of growth of about 7.6 percent [2, p.23]. The origin and characteristics of these rural-urban migrants have important implications for Dominican development authorities.

Development economists have focused most of their attention on the relationship between migration and industrialization and have explained migration in terms of return-to-labor differentials, [15; 17; 18]. Many studies have considered age, sex, education, income, and distance from industrial centers as factors influencing internal migration. Only slight attention has been given to changes in actual occupational classifications rather than broad employment categories of migrants and the opportunities, or the lack of them, for persons seeking their first employment.

Objectives

The objectives of this paper are (1) to describe the social and economic characteristics of recent rural-urban migrants in the Dominican Republic, and (2) to determine the employment changes of recent rural-urban migrants.

The data for this study were taken from the 1970 National Demographic Census, conducted from December 1969 to March 1971 by the National Statistical Office of the Dominican Republic. The demographic data consist of 37,001 heads of households, both male and female. A sub-sample of 3,364 random observations was drawn from the original sample, representing approximately 9 percent of the demographic census. A further sub-sample of 325 observations was selected on the basis of recent residence, consisting of migrants who had lived in their present location at least one year but no more than five years.[1]

The data were also divided into rural and urban zones based on purely administrative criteria. In rural zones the sample unit was the "section," a political-administrative unit composed of about 400 dwellings. The urban zones consisted of unit "blocks" made up of about 80 dwellings, on the average, fluctuating between 40 and 120 dwellings [13, pp.6-8]. Urban zones were further codified in four units of population, ranging from less than 4,000 to more than 20,000 persons. According to the 1970 census, about 40 percent of the total population of 4 million lived in urban zones and 60 percent in rural zones [12, p.3].

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[1] Organization of the census data facilitated the selection of recent migrants by recording the number of years heads of household had lived in their present location when the census was taken. Recent migrants were defined as those who had lived in their present location no more than five years.

Characteristics of Rural-Urban Migrants

The 1970 National Demographic Census used the same six regic las-sifications as employed by the National Planning Office (Figure 1). Of the 325 migrants who were included in the sub-sample, 127 of them or 39 percent were located in Region 1 (Table 1). Santo Domingo, the capital, was located in Region 5. Every region except Region 5 experienced a decrease in population. The urban population of the Distrito Nacional grew from a population of 369,980 in 1960 to 673,470 in 1970, an increase of 82 percent in ten years [12, p.23].

Table 1. Recent Migrants Change in Residence by Region, Dominican Republic, 1970

Region	Previous Region of Residence	Region of Residence Now
	---------Percent----------	--------Percent--------
1	41	39
2	4	2
3	11	9
4	5	3
5	21	31
6	18	16
Total	100	100

Socio-economic characteristics

Within the 325 heads of households, 84 percent were males with an average age of 38. Ages ranged from 17 to 81, the age group 20-34 years accounted for 43 percent of the total (Table 2). Apparently, younger individuals were more likely to migrate than the older more established persons.

The average age of the migrant when he arrived in his present loca-

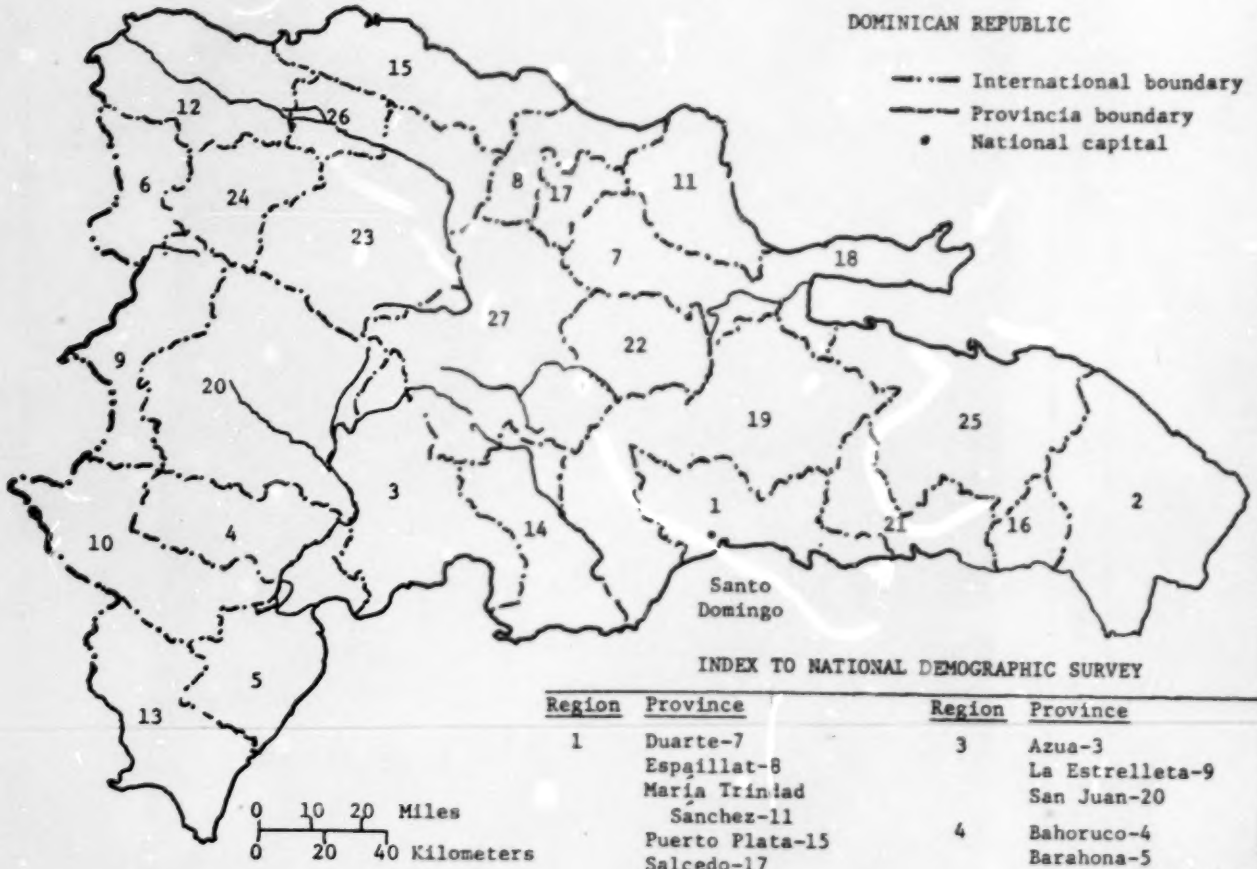

Figure 1. Dominican Republic, Demographic Regions

INDEX TO NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Region	Province	Region	Province
1	Duarte-7	3	Azua-3
	Espaillat-8		La Estrelleta-9
	María Trinidad Sánchez-11		San Juan-20
	Puerto Plata-15	4	Bahoruco-4
	Salcedo-17		Barahona-5
	Samana-18		Independencia-10
	Sánchez Ramírez-22		Pedernales-13
	Santiago-23	5	Distrito Nacional-1
	La Vega-27		Peravia-14
2	Dajabón-6		San Cristobal-19
	Monte Cristi-12	6	La Altagracia-2
	Santiago Rodríguez-24		La Romana-16
	Valverde-26		San Pedro Macoris-21
			El Seibo-25

tion was 35. Forty-seven percent of the migrants were from the ages of 20 to 34 (Table 3).

Table 2. Age of Migrant

Age	Number	Percent
15-19	4	1
20-24	35	11
25-29	57	17
30-34	48	15
35-39	55	17
40-44	41	13
45-49	22	7
50-54	20	6
55-59	14	4
60 and above	29	9
Total	325	100

Table 3. Age of Migrant When Arrived in Present Location

Age	Number	Percent
Age unknown	14	4
15-19	17	5
20-24	56	17
25-29	46	14
30-34	51	16
35-39	51	16
40-44	22	7
45-49	20	6
50-54	15	5
55-59	14	4
60 and above	19	6
Total	325	100

The average size of the migrant's family was five members with the range being from one to thirteen. The most frequently occurring family size was three, which made up 16 percent of the entire sample.

The head of household's education is an important characteristic in explaining internal migration [1; 6; 7; 16; 17]. People who obtain the most education in rural areas are also the ones who tend to move into urban areas. However, some individuals may migrate to large cities to obtain more schooling themselves or to provide secondary education for their children. The levels of education and the percentage of the migrants within each classification are shown in Table 4. The majority of migrants have less than a fourth grade education. Formal schooling in the Dominican Republic is divided into six years of primary education, 2 years of intermediate grades, and four years of secondary education. Only 65 percent of the migrants in this sample were able to read and write regardless of their level of education. They may have completed the first course of primary education but failed to keep up their ability to read and write.

Migration and Residence

Rapid changes in residences characterized internal migration in the Dominican Republic. Recent migrants, on the average had lived seventeen years in their previous residence, the range was from 0 to 69 years. Of the 325 migrants, 45 percent had lived in their present residence for only one year (Table 5). This indicates that a large percentage of people in this group were very recent migrants. The data indicated that 70 percent of the migrants lived in their present location less than four years. Sixty-seven percent of the migrants lived in a rural area before coming

to their present location, while 33 percent lived in urban areas previously.

Table 4. Education of Migrants

Years of Education	Number	Percent
No formal education	127	39
Primary education		
1	2	1
2	20	6
3	58	18
4	35	11
5	30	9
6	23	7
Intermediate education		
7	8	2
8	12	4
Secondary education		
9	1	0[a]
10	2	1
11	1	0[a]
12	3	1
University	3	1
Total	325	100

[a]Less than .5 percent.

Table 5. Years Residence in Present Location

Years in Present Location	Number	Percent
1	145	45
2	44	13
3	37	12
4	27	8
5	72	22
Total	325	100

Migration and Change in Occupations

Employment opportunities, which were limited or at least seasonal in the rural sector, provided a big incentive for internal migration. The constant division of paternal land holdings among farm families and restrictions on the development of new land from government forests have resulted in higher man-land ratios that further accelerated rural-urban migration [23; 24]. Rural migrants, often young people looking for their first job, are assumed to enter the traditional employment sector first and after a period of time some of the migrants find permanent employment in the modern sector [10, p.139].

Recent migrants were categorized as to their previous and actual occupation, and whether they had changed their occupation. Twenty-five percent of the group indicated that they had changed their occupation. Of this group, 41 percent were previously unemployed (Table 6). Thirty-four percent were previously farmers and agricultural workers. The percentage of head of households in agriculture increased to 39 percent. Plantation labor may account for the growth in agricultural employment. As anticipated, the percentage of head of households employed in government work, semi-skilled occupations, food processing, personal services, community sales, and unskilled occupations increased significantly. These were occupations available for persons seeking their first job, such as women becoming domestic servants, and salesmen setting up small shops or working in relatives' stores. The later categories are often called "disguised unemployment" [10, p. 34].

Anticipation of better employment was a major factor in the migrants' decision to move from their previous residence. Over 40 percent of the migrants moved because they were looking for better economic conditions (Table 7). The decline of the number of industries in some areas and

restrictive government policies on the development of new agricultural land were among the economic conditions which have been "push" factors in the rural-urban migration.

Table 6. Migrant's Current and Previous Occupations, Dominican Republic, 1970

Occupation	Previous Occupation	Current Occupation
	------Percent------	-----Percent------
Unemployed	41.0	4.5
Armed Forces	4.1	5.5
Professionals	---	1.4
Government Workers	1.8	5.5
Community Sales	2.6	10.7
Agriculture	34.8	39.0
Sailors	3.2	4.5
Semi-Skilled	3.4	6.2
Mechanics	.8	.6
Food Processing	2.6	8.8
Unskilled	3.0	6.4
Personnel Services	2.7	6.9
Total	100.0	100.0

An important factor for migrants was the amount of time the head of household was unemployed when he migrated. Thirty percent were unemployed from 3 to 4 weeks, another 15 percent spent between 5 to 8 weeks unemployed, and 25 percent of the migrants were unemployed 52 weeks or more. Apparently, migrants quickly found employment in their new locations.

Conclusions

Rural to urban migration will continue to be a major factor in the Dominican Republic. With rapid population growth, limited agricultural resources, and employment possibilities in rural areas, the probability

of obtaining local employment decreases and a greater tendency for rural-urban migration results. The data indicate a number of important implications. The mean age of the most recent rural-urban migrants indicates that they moved while they were young, leaving the older population in farming.

Table 7. Migrants Reasons for Moving, Dominican Republic, 1970

Reasons	Percent
Looking for better economic conditions	50.9
Parents brought them	18.3
Husband brought her	11.8
Wanted to live in national capital	4.5
Wanted to change residence	4.5
Came to study	3.6
Son was in Santo Domingo	1.8
No reason	4.6
Total	100.0

SOURCE: Oficina Nacional de Estadística, Simposio Sobre el uso de los datos de Población del Censo de 1970, 24-26 de Mayo de 1972 (Santo Domingo: Oficina Nacional de Estadística, June 1972), p. 154.

The availability of educational facilities may be part of the reason for rural-urban migration. Some families send their children to urban areas for their secondary education or they may move to urban centers in order to educate their children. There is need for a rural development strategy which provides educational opportunities in rural areas and tailors educational investments to the acquisition of skills basic to the local economy.

The data indicate that recent migrants greatly improved their employment possibilities. Only about 4.5 percent of the migrants remained

unemployed after moving. Many migrants were formerly farmers and agricultural laborers while others were looking for their first job. Employment of these unskilled migrants depends upon the growth of traditional sector jobs in urban areas rather than modern sector occupations. The implication here is the need for the creation of farm and nonfarm employment opportunities in the rural areas and increased investment in rural infrastructure. If rural employment opportunities are not increased, unemployment in urban areas could become an explosive economic and political issue during periods of slow economic growth.

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